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MULTICULTURALISM IN SELECT INDIAN ENGLISH NOVELS

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Introduction:

The concept of multiculturalism was originated in the 1970s and was used in Canada for the first time to tackle the problem of immigrants. Multiculturalism is defined as the state of co-existence of divers cultures. Culture includes racial,religious,linguistics etc. Multiculturalism is the phenomenon of multiple groups of cultures existing within one society, largely due to arrival of immigrants communities. Their cultural identities reflected in every aspect of life – worship, fellowship, leadership, religious education, social justice etc. As a result of international migration, multiculturalism has become the dominant theory in the last 20-30 years in some countries of western civilization.That's why multiculturalism became prominent theme of some novels. Authors who had first hand experience of both cultures, they presented their experiences through their books. Multiculturalism takes these familiar cultural markers of ethnic groups- clothing, cuisine and music and treats them as a authentic practices to be preserved by their members and safely consumed by others. Under the banner of multiculturalism they are taught in school, performed in festivals, displayed in media and museums and so on. Multiculturalism can restore cultural rights by emphasising cultural equality and respect.

In recent years, the idea of multiculturalism has become a powerful—and controversial—influence in a variety of social and cultural territories. The present research work proposes to analyse and compare the multicultural elements in the select Indian English novels. The phenomena of multiculturalism and expatriation are by all means an old one. However, its impact in the present times is larger and deeper. Multiculturalism is a social theory but plays vital role in literary studies. It brings together different themes such as cultural diversity, recognition, mutual concern, peaceful coexistence of many cultures and subcultures. Developments in the studies of globalization and interculturalism,already representing a wider study than the single-language nation-state approach, may be well suited to move away from the paradigm of the nation-state. Multiculturalism is so intimately bound up in many parts of the world with those practices and discourses which manage 'diversity'. Multiculturalism means different things in different contexts and in Canada, United States of America and United Kingdom, the term is intertwined with questions of racialized differences that have so far not been given sufficient recognition India

India is the best example of multicultural society where people speaks 122 major languages and 1599 other languages. The Indian society has been multi- cultural, multi-religious and multi – linguistic. Indian culture is different from that of other countries, i.e.America,Canada,Australia. Within India, culture changes from state to state, region to region, religion to religion. Present novels compare Multicultural aspects not only within India but also those of India with other countries. Some migrant Indian writers in other places like America, Canada develop their own way of writing which consist of multicultural elements cultural conflict, recognition, mutual concern, peaceful co-existence etc. They depict their cultural experiences in their novels.But each writer has different experience regarding it. Multiculturalism in India is too often ignored as a significant factor in the proliferating work in cultural studies or as part of socially progressive critical theory. As an official policy Multiculturalism succeeds to create social cultural harmony, mutual tolerance and respected among different cultures. The present study intends to compare and contrast such kind of experiences and notions of writers with the help of select Indian English novels. In order to state a research statement, following writers and their representative works will be considered for the present study.

1. **Tishani Doshi**

Tishani Doshi was born on 9thDecember 1975.She is an Indian poet, journalist and dancer based in Chennai. She was born in Chennai, from Welsh mother and Gujarati father. She received an Eric Gregory Award in 2001.Her first poetry collection, *Countries of the body* won the 2006 Forward Poetry Prize for best first collection. She was invited to poetry galas of the Guardian- sponsored Hay festival of 2006 and the Cartagena Hay festival of 2007.Her first novel, *The Pleasure Seekers* was published by Bloomsbury in 2010 and was long listed for the 'Orange Prize in 2011 and shortlisted for the Hindu Best fiction Award in 2010.She writes a blog titled 'Hit or Miss' on cricinfo a cricket related website. She has worked as a freelance writer as well as associated with Chandralekha, Choreographer. She had a degree in creative writing from the John's Hopkins University. *Countries of the Body*

was launched in 2006 at the Hay -on-wye festival on a platform with Seamus Heaney, Margaret Atwood and others. The opening poem *The Day We Went to the Sea* won the 2005 British Council supported All India Poetry Competition. She was also finalist in the outlook – picador for Non-fiction competition.

She earned B.A. from Queens college in north Carolina. After working in the fashion magazine industry in London Doshi returned to India. Her first novel *The Pleasure Seekers* (2010) has been translated into several languages. This novel sets partially in London and India. Novel started in August 1968 when Babo protagonist of the novel left the Patel family in Madras to fly to England and further his education. With rich feelings and dazzling language Doshi evokes both Zadies smith and Rohinton Mistry as she captures the quirks and calamities of identity, family, belongings and all transcending love.

2. Thrity Umrigar

Thrity Umrigar is an Indo -American journalist, critic and novelist. She was born to a Parsi family in Mumbai, relocated in the United States at the age of twenty one Thrity Umarigar received a bachelor of science from Bombay university and M.A. from Ohio State University, and a Ph.D. in English from Kent State University. She is the Armitage professor of English at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. She got Naiman fellowship for journalism at Harvard University in year 2000.She became finalist for the PEN /open book award in year 2009. In 2013 -Lambda Literary Award in lesbian General Fiction category for her novel *The World We Found*.

If Today be Sweet is a psychological fiction written in 2007.It is a story of Tehmina Sethna whose beloved husband died and now she is visiting her son, Sorabh in his suburban Ohio home. So Tehmina is in dilemma between her old familiar life in India and new one in Ohio with her son, his American wife and their child. She must decide whether to leave the comforting landscape of her native India for strange rituals of life in a new country. This novel is about family and community. Novel focuses on the issues of immigration, identity, family life and hope. Novel shows that how cultures can collide and become better for it. Tehmina ‘Tammy’ Sethna is torn between two cultures that couldn't more different Bombay and Cleveland. Umarigar's intimate portrayal of a mother and son divided by culture is a convincing testament to the enduring power of place.

3. Nafisa Haji

Nafisa Haji is an American of Indo-Pakistani descent. She was born and mostly brought up in Los Angels. She has also spent some years in Chicago, Karachi,Manilaand London. Her family immigrated from Bombay to Karachi in 1947 during partition. In late 1960s Nafisa's parents came to United States shortly before she was born. Nafisa studied American history at the university of the California. She also earned doctorate in education from the university of the California at Los Angels. Her first novel *The Writing on My Forehead* was a finalist for the Northern California Independent Booksellers Association book of the year award.

In her novel *The Writing on My Forehead* (2009), Nafisa Haji traces her impressive debut the fortunes of a family divided by secrets and lies as much as by the 1947 partition of the Indian subcontinent. Saira Qader, an American teenager of Indo –Pakistani descent, lives a sheltered life in California with her older sister Ameena and their overprotective and fiercely traditional parents. Saira's view of her family changes dramatically when she attends a wedding in Karachi and learns about her grandparents.

In her second novel *The Sweetness of Tears* (2011) is a powerful reminder of the ties that bind us, the choices that divide us and the universal joys and tragedies that shape us all. In this novel, Nafisa Haji returns to the emotional terrain of her previous novel, *The Writing on My Forehead*. Novel *The Sweetness of Tears* is a story about Jo and her twin brother Chris who have grown up in an evangelical Christian family. Their great grandfather was a famous preacher.She learns from her mother that her biological father was a young Pakistani and she goes to Chicago to find him and hear his story. The memories of both Jo's father Sadiq and his mother Deena reveals much about a complex culture where Sunnis and Shias bump up against one another worship takes many different forms and classes and traditional shape destinies.

4. Amulya Malladi

Amulya Malladi was born in 1974 in a small town called Sagar in the central state of Madhya Pradesh. As her father was in Indian Army Amulya Malladi has lived all over the country ranging from the Himalayan foot hills to the southern city of Madras. She earned her bachelor degree in electrical and electronics engineering from Hyderabad. She followed it up

with a Masters degree in journalism from university of Memphis Tennessee. After gaining the journalism degree, she worked as a copy writer and marketing manager for a software company in Silicon Valley, California.

The novel *The Mango Season (*2003) is a story of Priya Rao who left India when she was twenty to study in America. Now,seven years later, she has returned for a visit to discover her parents are intent on arranging her marriage to a suitable Indian boy. But she left behind her a fiance in America, affiance of an entirely different race and religion.

All the commonplaces of culture clash are on display in this novel. Riya hides her engagement to an American man from her traditional Brahmin family. Malladi succeeds in giving a vivid sensory impression of the southern India, its food and climate and custom. *The Mango Season* this is a powerful novel that explores what happens when two cultures collide. Novel explore themes of family, identity,nostalgia, marriage and national cultural and culinary tradition. After arriving in Hyderabad, Priya is immediately struck by the overwhelming cultural differences between her homeland and America.

5. Samina Ali

Samina Ali is an American author and activist. Samina serves as the curator of Muslima:Muslim women's Art and voices a global,virtual exhibition for the 'International Museum of Women', now part of Global fund for Women. She is the co-founder of American Muslim feminist organization 'Daughters of Hajar'. Her debut novel *Madras on Rainy Days* (2004) was awarded the Prix Premier Roman Etranger award from France and was a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award. She is a blogger for the Huffington post and daily Beast. In year 2004 Samina received the Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers Award in fiction. In same year *Madras on Rainy Days* was chosen as a best debut novel of the year by poets and writers magazine. Samina always focused on gender justice. *Madras on Rainy Days* is a novel written by Samina Ali and published in 2004.This book explores the life of Layla, a second generation Indian-American Muslim. She is torn between clashing identities, agrees to her parents wish for her to leave America submit to an arranged marriage. Layla enters into the closed world of traditions and rituals as the wedding preparation, get underway on Hyderabad.

6. Indira Ganeshan

Indira Ganeshan was born in Srirangam south India and immigrated to the United states when she was five years old. She graduated with honours from Vassar college and received her MFA from the Lowa Writers Workshop. Indira Ganeshan is the author of two novels- *The journey* and *Inheritance*. She has held fellowship from the Paden Institute for writers of colour, The Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute at Radcliffe College, and the fine to the W.K. rise fellowship. Her first novel, *The Journey* was recognised by 'Granta's first best 52 American novelist campaign. *The Journey* is the story of two sisters named Renu and Manx who lived for a decade in a suburban America world of shopping malls and fast food restaurants. Return to their home, the island of Pi. the Bay of Bengal. Character's lives are shaped by two cultures. This is a story of a young girl's search for self within two different cultures.

Review of the Relevant Literature:

The select novels are significant in the Indian English Literature. Few scholars and critics attempted to explore some of the select novels. For instance, The book entitled *Multiculturalism in Indian fiction in English* by Ashok Chaskar and *Multiculturalism in Indian: Tradition and literature* by M.Gopalachary. Some of the select novels are explored in the research papers and books for example. *Interpreter of Maldives, The Namesake, Unaccustomed Earth* novels by Jhumpa Lahiri but comparative study of the select novels from the perspective of multiculturalism as a representative novels in Indian English literature, is yet to be explored.

As far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned, no extensive research work has been carried out in this direction in any of the Indian Universities, So far. Thus, the present study tries to compare and contrast the select novels from multicultural perspective.

Hypothesis: -

The select novels of the representative Indian English writers portray multicultural aspects like cultural diversity, cultural conflict, recognition, peaceful coexistence of many cultures and subcultures and assimilation in the Indian society.

Aims and Objectives of the study:-

The present research work is significant as it incorporates Indian writers who are living in other countries in spite of their Indian origin. It throws the light on common issues of multiculturalism like cultural diversity, cultural conflict, recognition, peaceful coexistence of many cultures and subcultures, assimilation etc. and compares the select novels in light of multiculturalism. The present study will provide new dimension regarding the depiction of these issues in the Indian English literature. The present research work will critically examine the select novels and try to unfold different multicultural experiences by comparing and contrasting the select novels.

In short, the objectives of the present study are as follows:

a. To prepare a theoretical framework of the term 'Multiculturalism' to analyse the select novels.
b. To compare the select novels of Indian authors in the light of multiculturalism.
c. To examine the aspects of multiculturalism such as cultural diversity, cultural conflict, recognition, peaceful coexistence of many cultures and subcultures.
d. To understand the influences of the respective cultures on the select novels of the representative authors.

Scope and Limitations:

The scope of the present study is limited one. The focus of the study will be on the select novels from the select Indian English novelists from different regional background. Many expatriate novelists in India have dealt with the multiculturalism; they are not in the purview of the study. It is also not possible to analyse every novelist who has dealt with this theme. Moreover it is, also, not possible to analyse each and every novels of these authors. So, the study will undertake the analysis of the following novels.

- Tishani Doshi-***The Pleasure Seekers***
- Thrity Umrigar-***If Today be Sweet***
- Nafisa Haji-***The Sweetness of Tears***
- Amulya Malladi-***The Mango Season***

- Samina Ali-***Madras on Rainy Days***
- Indira Ganeshan-***The Journey***.

Rationale behind the selection:

All the novels —,*The Pleasure Seekers, If Today be Sweet, The Sweetness of Tears, The Mango Season, Madras on Rainy Days, The Journey* - are well received by the critics and readers. These novels are significant Indian English literature. These novels are not just the representation of multiculturalism spread across the borders of a country, but also the experience of traversing boundaries and barriers of space, time, race, culture, language and history.

Methodology:

The analytical,interpretative and comparative methods will be used for the present study. The focus of the study will be on the close reading of primary and secondary data. The select novels will be analysed on the basis of broader theoretical framework of multiculturalism.

Tentative Chapter Scheme

Chapter I: Introduction

1) *Life and Works of select Indian English Writers*
2) *Aims and Objective of the study*
3) *Scope and Limitations of the study*
4) *Methodology of the study*

Chapter II:

1) *Multiculturalism: A Theoretical Framework*

Chapter III: Multiculturalism in

1) *The Pleasure Seekers by Tishani Doshi,*
2) *If Today be Sweet by Thrity Umarigar,*

Chapter IV: Multiculturalism in

1) *The Mango Season* by Amulya Malladi,
2) *Madras on Rainy Days* by Samina Ali,

Chapter V: Multiculturalism in

1) *The Journey* by Indira Ganeshan.
2) *The Sweetness of Tears by Nafisa Haji*

Chapter VI: Conclusion

Thus, it is hoped that the present study will be a modest contribution to understand and compare the novels of these Indian migrated writers from the perspective of multiculturalism.

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